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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 09 TEL AVIV 001533

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STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM  
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA  
HQ USAF FOR XXXX  
DA WASHDC FOR SASA  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA  
USCINCENT MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR  
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD  
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD  
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL  
PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [IS](#) [KMDR](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#) [REPORT](#)  
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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- [1](#). Mideast
- [2](#). Iran
- [3](#). Lebanese-Syrian Track

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Key stories in the media:  
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Leading media reported that FM Tzipi Livni, who successfully proposed revoking the Jerusalem residency of the Hamas legislators, persuaded a governmental forum convened on Tuesday to continue with its characterization of the PA as a "hostile entity," rather than adopting terminology proposed by the defense establishment: "enemy entity." Yediot and other media reported that in the wake of Monday's bombing in Tel Aviv, the forum decided to issue a warning to the PA rather than conduct a military operation. Israel Radio quoted a senior IDF officer as saying that the army is prepared to conduct an operation in the Gaza Strip if Hamas does not act against terror. The Jerusalem Post quoted a senior GOI official as saying Wednesday that Israel is considering expanding its Tuesday decision to revoke the Jerusalem residency of three Hamas Palestinian Legislative Council members and a PA cabinet minister to include other known Hamas members or even PA workers living in the city. Major media wrote that Hamas intends to petition the High Court of Justice against the GOI decision. The Jerusalem Post reported that a senior Israeli official noted the irony that Hamas officials, who do not recognize Israel, were threatening to petition an Israeli court. The Jerusalem Post quoted GOI officials as saying that the policy of targeted assassinations would continue and that road blocks and patrols along the Green Line would be increased to crack down on people illegally smuggling Palestinian workers across the Green Line. The media reported that three Knesset members from the United Arab List-Arab Movement for Renewal met with a Hamas parliamentarian in East Jerusalem on Wednesday.

Ha'aretz reported that Egypt and Saudi Arabia are pressing Hamas to adopt the Arab League declaration passed in Beirut in 2002. The declaration included recognition of the 1967 borders and a just solution to the refugee problem. Ha'aretz and Israel Radio said that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak wants to arrange a meeting between Olmert and PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas.

Leading media reported that Islamic Jihad and other Palestinian organizations have asked Abbas to apologize over his condemnation of the Tel Aviv bombing. Maariv cited a "secret" document in which Palestinian PM Ismail Haniyeh, prompted by Hamas political leader Khaled Mashal, "dries up" the PLO. Haniyeh was quoted as writing in the document that only the salaries of Hamas members in the PA administration will be paid.

Yediot reported that the Bush administration is

considering turning to the International Atomic Energy Agency, circumventing the UN Security Council to take steps that would terminate the Iranian nuclear program. Major media cited a story published in the British newspaper The Guardian on Wednesday that the Committee for the Commemoration of Martyrs of the Global Islamic Campaign, an Iranian group claiming to be an independent body that has the backing of the Iranian regime, said that it is seeking to recruit Muslims in Britain for attacks on Israel. Yediot reported that the Simon Wiesenthal Center has asked the German government to reconsider its decision to let Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad come to the upcoming soccer world championship. Yediot and The Jerusalem Post reported that last week, an Iranian representative was appointed as a deputy chair of the UN Disarmament Committee. Yediot wrote that the case was akin to a "cat guarding the cream."

Maariv (lead story) and other major media quoted UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan as saying on Wednesday

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that Lebanon must dismantle Hizbullah. Annan was responding to the publication of a report issued by UN Lebanon envoy Terje Roed-Larsen that found that Hizbullah was continuing to rule in southern Lebanon and to receive weapons from Syria -- including Katyusha rockets. Yediot reported that UN investigators might interrogate Syrian President Bashar Assad Friday regarding his possible involvement in the assassination of Lebanese PM Rafiq Hariri. Israel Radio reported that five Qassam rockets landed south of Ashkelon this morning. There were no injuries or material damage. The station reported that the IDF responded with artillery fire.

Major media reported that the Jordanian government canceled a planned visit to Amman by PA FM Mahmoud Zahar, saying that Hamas had smuggled weapons into the kingdom. Leading media reported that Hamas leaders strongly denied the charges.

Ha'aretz quoted German Justice Minister Brigitte Zypries as saying at a news conference Tuesday at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) that Berlin will work with Washington on opening millions of files on hundreds of slave-labor and concentration camps, now being preserved in the German town of Bad Arolsen. Yediot quoted USHMM Director Sara Bloomfield as saying that the German government's decision to open the archives was significant both historically and morally. Maariv and The Jerusalem Post also reported on the matter.

Yediot reported that it was Olmert who suggested the title of the 1990 Hollywood movie "Pretty Woman" to producer Arnon Milchan and director Garry Marshall.

Major media reported that President Bush's Deputy Chief of Staff Karl Rove and White House Press Secretary Scot McClellan have tendered their resignation. The media said that the purpose of the changes was to rejuvenate the White House and stop the slide in public opinion polls. The Jerusalem Post printed an AP story that President Bush nominated Trade Representative Rob Portman as the White House budget director.

Ha'aretz, The Jerusalem Post, and other media reported that on Tuesday, the High Court of Justice rejected petitions by Palestinians for injunctions to delay the completion of the separation fence near the Palestinian villages of Bir Naballah, Beit Hanina, Al Jib, Jedira, Qalandya and A-Ram, north of Jerusalem. The court will allow Israel to complete the construction of the separation fence surrounding Jerusalem. The court ruled that the state may now complete the fence since alternate roads and checkpoints have been constructed to enable unrestricted Palestinian travel.

Leading media cited demands by senior Labor Party members that the party be handed the finance and education portfolios. Yediot and other media quoted senior Kadima officials as saying that Labor will not be a government coalition partner if the price is too high.

The Jerusalem Post reported that FBI agents tried to gain access to documents of the late reporter Jack Anderson to find material related to the AIPAC case.

Maariv reported that on Wednesday, Israeli photographer Rina Castelnuovo, the New York Times' photographer in Israel, won the Overseas Press Club prize, which Maariv said is the equivalent of a Pulitzer Prize for foreign reporting.

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1. Mideast:  
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Summary:  
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Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "A boycott of the Hamas government, such as the one developing internationally, may be more effective than any Israeli action."

Middle East affairs commentator Dr. Guy Bechor, a lecturer at the Interdisciplinary Center, wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "Those who talk about peace with Israel do not mean real peace, but are looking for a way to reach the US consciousness and Western money."

Block Quotes:  
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I. "Who Is Responsible?"

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (4/20): "The clear-cut statement by the Hamas government's spokesman that the Tel Aviv suicide bombing was a 'legitimate step of self-defense against the occupation' determines for all intents and purposes that government's responsibility for the attack.... Despite the inherent international expectation of an Israeli response to the Tel Aviv attack, the ball is still in the Palestinian court. The Palestinians can still prevent another round of violence.... Marwan Barghouti's ability to attain a new cease-fire from prison is limited, but any initiative of this kind, whether from jail, Israel, the PA or elsewhere in the world, is welcome. The call by the right-wing parties for a widespread military action should not be heeded, since vengeance is not a policy. A boycott of the Hamas government, such as the one developing internationally, may be more effective than any Israeli action."

II. "The Terrorist PA"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (4/20): "The PA's highest echelons cannot and must not be absolved of responsibility for this latest massacre, even if it is Islamic Jihad's handiwork. Not only does the Hamas establishment not dissociate itself from the deadly attack on civilians, its own creed is also identical with that of Islamic Jihad. Hamas's charter declares that 'the liberation of Palestine' -- a euphemism for eradicating the Jewish state -- 'is the individual duty for every Muslim wherever he may be. Israel will exist only until Islam obliterates it.' This is the mind-set that now governs the PA; this is the vicious message it seeks to spread to its people.... Homicide-by-suicide has been adopted by Islamic terror-mongers throughout the globe. Strikingly and appallingly, we have yet to see any serious, widespread and effective opposition to the practice instituted by moderate Muslims. In the meantime, Israelis and other Westerners must exercise the inherent right of self-preservation -- and seek, savvily and resolutely, to thwart the murderous ambitions of the bombers, the Qassam cells, the PA government that champions them... and the ambitions, too, of the Iranian regime that helps inspire and fund them."

III. "Israel Is Just the Means"

Middle East affairs commentator Dr. Guy Bechor, a lecturer at the Interdisciplinary Center, wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (4/20): "Ostensibly, this is a mirror image: some of the Middle East talks about peace with Israel, has signed peace agreements with it and the Arab world is supposedly bound by the Saudi peace initiative. Another part talks about war with Israel, even its destruction, such as the Palestinian Authority or Iran. But in fact, this is very same phenomenon. Those who talk about peace with Israel do not mean real peace, but are looking for a way to reach the US consciousness and Western money. They know that Washington is impressed by the tones of peaces, but the goal [of that approach] is not Israel, but America. Israel is the ladder by which they will get to Washington.... Iran today hopes to become a Middle East, perhaps a world, superpower. How, as a discounted Shi'ite country among the Arabs, will it ascend to such a lofty status? It will fight Israel, at least verbally.... We must not become overly excited by Arab peace initiatives, since what is

usually behind them is local distress, as was the case with Sadat, Gemayel, Arafat, and Hussein, and they are therefore also limited. More than Israel needs this initiative, the other side needs it. Therefore, as determined by the rules of negotiations, Israel must demand more in return.... Israeli misunderstanding of what lies behind declarations of war and peace in the Middle East has in the past led to disaster and disillusionment, and this is liable to happen now too. We must pray that Israel's new leadership knows that in our region, what is hidden is larger than what is revealed, particularly when it refers to Israel, and we must distinguish well between reality and illusion."

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12. Iran:  
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Summary:  
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Liberal op-ed writer Yigal Sarna wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "The threat of mutual destruction prevents killing."

Nationalist writer Uri Dan opined in popular, pluralist Maariv and the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "Is Israel sending ... a pervasive message of weakness, one that ... invites the venom that may be paving the way for a military offensive directed against us?"

Block Quotes:  
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1I. "In Praise of the Iranian Bomb"

Liberal op-ed writer Yigal Sarna wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (4/20): "The spin of Iran's atom has long served the pressures of the [Israeli] defense establishment and the need for a scarecrow of awe.... I'll ... place myself against the grain of all the fears, the reports, and even the boastful speeches of the big-mouthed Iranian, and say that Iran is no more a paranoid state than Mofaz's Israel or Bush's America.... In terms of a current military operation, [Iran] is less violent and threatening than the latter... The threat of mutual destruction prevents killing, in the same way as the International War Crimes Tribunal reins in countries -- Israel, too -- from carrying out wild military operations.... In the distant future the two regional powers [Israel and Iran] that had a stormy love affair a generation ago may get close to each other."

II. "What Kind of Tree Is Israel?"

Nationalist writer Uri Dan opined in popular, pluralist Maariv and the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (4/20): "Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad repeated his well-known intent to erase Israel from the map last Friday with a new twist: 'Israel is a rotten, dried tree that will be annihilated in one storm.' Ha'aretz, the self-appointed paper for the thinking classes, buried this terrible, blatant threat deep inside its news pages.... The International Herald Tribune ... hid the threat to destroy Israel in a small item ... without even calling attention to it in the headline.... But give Ha'aretz and The International Herald Tribune a story about 'A young Palestinian killed by IDF shelling ... and you will usually find the news item with a banner headline on those papers' front pages.... Is Israel sending ... a pervasive message of weakness, one that feeds and fosters -- in fact invites -- the venom that may be paving the way for a military offensive directed against us?.... The Iranian-Hamas-Hizbullah threat is the most serious Israel has faced since the Yom Kippur War in 1973. If Ahmadinejad's remark offends us, we should cut off those dry branches, of which there are too many, and remove the dry rot, of which there is too much, so that when the day comes Ahmadinejad and his ilk will be able to sense the strong roots that support the Jewish tree."

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13. Lebanese-Syrian Track:  
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Summary:  
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Arab affairs correspondent Jackie Hoogie wrote in

popular, pluralist Maariv: "Kofi Annan's call to Hizbullah to disarm will record soon enough a highly publicized accomplishment -- it will toughen Hassan Nasrallah's position."

Block Quotes:

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"Terrible Timing"

Arab affairs correspondent Jackie Hoogie wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv (4/20): "Perhaps Israeli officials are pleased today, but just a moment -- it is only a UN report. If not for the sensitive timing, it is likely that even this report would be swept under the Persian rugs that adorn Iran's embassy in Beirut. Kofi Annan's call to Hizbullah to disarm will record soon enough a highly publicized accomplishment -- it will toughen Hassan Nasrallah's position.... Today, both the West and Jerusalem understand that like the withdrawal of the Syrian army, the disarmament of Hizbullah cannot be imposed from outside, but only by Lebanese agreement. Indeed, efforts in this direction have been made in recent weeks. All the parties and powerful forces in Lebanese politics are joining together in the National Dialogue, a new forum that is intended to resolve the most sensitive national questions.... Since the IDF's withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000, the UN has sided with Israel in its position. Because of that, and through no fault of its own, it is perceived by Hizbullah as a hostile element. The publication of the Larsen Report as the National Forum dialogue is at its height will only help Nasrallah to claim that abandoning the armed struggle is a gift to the UN and to its ally, Zionism."

JONES